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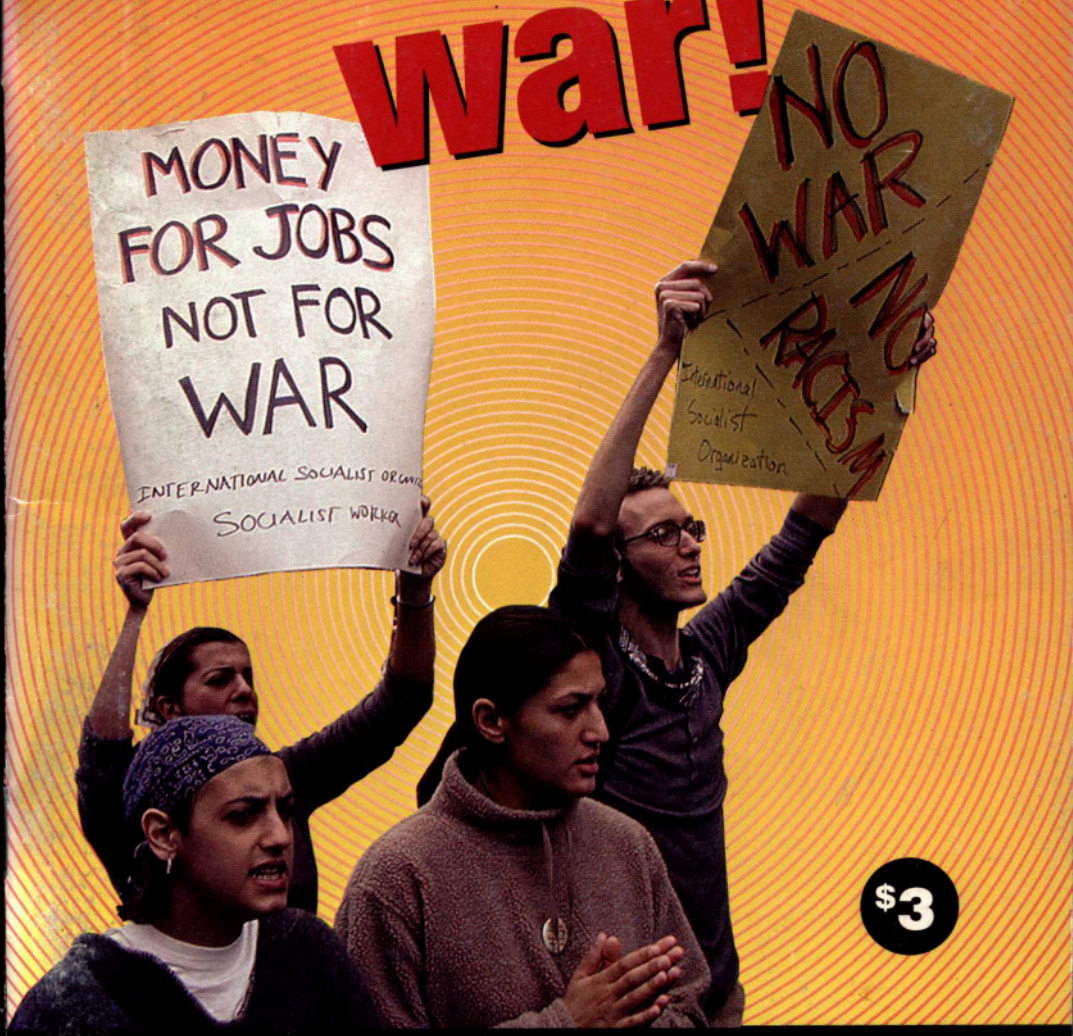
A *Socialist Worker* PAMPHLET

Stop the war!



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Includes articles from *Socialist Worker*.

Plus Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky, Rania Masri, Norman Solomon and Ahmed Shawki.

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Cover and cover photo by Eric Ruder. Pamphlet designed and typeset by David Whitehouse.

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Stop the War! / Articles from *Socialist Worker*

Stop the war!

A PAMPHLET FROM
Socialist Worker

Contents

2 Introduction
3 The mad rush to war
9 "We won't stand for this racism"
12 The rights they want to take away
14 Bush's new best friends
16 How Afghanistan was bled dry
23 The U.S., Israel and the Middle East
26 The U.S.: Beacon of democracy?
31 Why we say no to war and hate
38 Build the struggle against the war
41 Where to find the facts

Introduction

THE U.S. government has begun to rain death and destruction on one of the poorest countries on earth.

George W. Bush and the politicians in Washington are exploiting the September 11 tragedies in New York and Washington—and the national and international outpourings of grief and outrage that followed—as an excuse for war and hate.

Before even a single bomb fell, millions of ordinary Afghans were suffering after the U.S. disrupted desperately needed food aid from getting to the starving. Hundreds of thousands had fled their homes, with many more certain to follow in the weeks to come—this in a country with one of the largest refugee populations in the world.

Bush and his generals have promised a sustained war. The world's mightiest military machine will use the most advanced means of destruction ever known against a devastated and poverty-stricken country.

And they do this in the name of "justice."

Bush says that the U.S. is going to war not against the Afghan people, but against "terrorism"—specifically against Osama bin Laden and his protectors in Afghanistan's Taliban government. That will be cold comfort to the starving refugees who pay the price of Washington's war. Of course, it wasn't so long ago that U.S. political leaders called bin Laden and his allies "freedom fighters"—when the CIA was arming and training radical Islamists to fight the ex-USSR's military occupation of Afghanistan.

Justice and freedom have nothing to do with this war. The U.S. government is sending a message to the world—to allies and enemies alike—by claiming the right to "end nations and change governments" as it pleases.

And it's sending a message to people in the U.S.—as Bush spokesperson Ari Fleischer warned, "All Americans…need to watch what they say, watch what they do." This is the meaning of the drive to restrict civil liberties and silence dissent, the racist hysteria that has led to murderous attacks on Arab Americans, and the flag-waving bluster used to justify everything from airline layoffs to racial profiling.

Washington is sending a message: What we say goes.

But around the U.S., tens of thousands of people have stood up to send a message to Washington: Not in our name.

People like Judy Keane, whose husband was killed in the World Trade Center attack. Judy organized a vigil of 5,000 people outside her home of Waterfield, Conn., to call for peace. "The last thing on earth he would want is for his children to avenge his death," Judy told Amy Goodman, host of the radio show *Democracy Now!* "Bombing Afghanistan is not going to end terrorism. It will create more widows and more fatherless children."

There are thousands more people like Judy in every city in the U.S., and they've begun to organize—holding forums, teach-ins and protests across the country. Their message is that Washington's war makers don't speak for us.

This pamphlet puts together the facts, analysis and arguments that won't get a hearing in the corporate-run mainstream media. Its chapters are compiled from the pages of *Socialist Worker*—articles written almost entirely in the first two weeks after September 11. This information can help you to build an opposition to Bush's drive to war.

It's time to stand up and make our voices heard: Don't turn a tragedy into war and hate!

The mad rush to war

HANDMADE POSTERS of those missing in the World Trade Center tragedy were still being posted by family and friends of the victims a week after the air attacks—heart-wrenching testimony to the suffering and loss of September 11.

But George W. Bush had a different kind of poster in mind when he visited the Pentagon a few days after the attacks. "I want justice," Bush told reporters. "There's an old poster out West, as I recall, that said, 'Wanted: Dead or Alive.'"

Bush was appealing to most people's desire to hold the right people responsible for a terrible loss of life. But Washington is after something else entirely.

Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz let the real agenda slip when he called for "ending states who sponsor terrorism." And in his speech before a joint session of Congress, Bush declared the right to make war on any nation that doesn't toe the U.S. line—anywhere and anytime. "Every nation in every region now has a decision to make," Bush said. "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists."

What gives the U.S. government the right to end states, change governments and determine the fate of people around the world? But this is exactly the right that Washington is claiming for itself.

Never mind that there is little real evidence linking prime suspect Osama bin Laden to the attacks. Never mind that bin Laden and his followers were armed and trained by the CIA to drive the Russians out of Afghanistan in the 1980s.

"The resistance of the Afghan freedom fighters is an example to all the world of the invincibility of the ideals we in this country hold most dear, the ideals of freedom and independence." Or so said President Ronald Reagan in declaring Afghanistan Day on March 21, 1983.

Now those "freedom fighters" run Afghanistan's Taliban government. But since they won't follow the U.S. agenda, a country ravaged by two decades of war will face the brutality of America's military and economic might.

Demonizing yesterday's allies is nothing new for the United States. Manuel Noriega, the former dictator of Panama, was a CIA "asset" until he crossed Washington—and was ousted and imprisoned after a U.S. invasion. Slobodan Milosevic, the former president of Yugoslavia, was hailed in Washington as a "peacemaker" until the U.S. decided that its interests were better served by launching NATO's war over Kosovo. And Washington politicians would have us forget that they backed Saddam Hussein in the horrific Iran-Iraq war of the 1980s.

Remember also the last time that the U.S. took action against "terrorism"—in 1998, after the bombing of two American embassies in Africa. U.S. cruise missiles destroyed a factory in Sudan that was allegedly producing chemical weapons and allegedly linked to bin Laden. In fact, the factory produced half of the antimalarial medicine for that famine-plagued country—and Washington later admitted that it knew all along that no connection to bin Laden existed.

The factory's destruction caused untold misery and death, and this new "war against terrorism" will be no different.

Bush and friends should also be judged by the company they keep. The U.S. is building a "coalition against terror" that depends on some of the world's most notorious abusers of human rights. Russia's horrific slaughter in Chechnya will be ignored to win united support for military action against Afghanistan. So will

Turkey's repression of the Kurds and China's crackdown on dissidents, to name a few other cases. "Your nationalists are my terrorists. My freedom fighters are your terrorists," wrote William Pfaff in the *International Herald Tribune*.

The U.S. even lifted sanctions imposed on India and Pakistan last year after they threatened each other with nuclear weapons tests. Meanwhile, Washington's insistence that Pakistan's military government support the war on bin Laden and the Taliban threatens to trigger a civil war in Pakistan, and possibly in other Muslim countries.

Working people in the U.S. will pay a price, too. Bush and his fanatical Attorney General John Ashcroft have made it clear what the war drive will mean at home: draconian new powers for law enforcement, the increased use of "secret evidence" and indefinite detention against immigrants, and fewer liberties and rights for all.

"In order for us to preserve America and our way of life, we're going to have to sacrifice American treasure, and unfortunately, in some cases, perhaps American blood," said Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.).

But some Americans will sacrifice more than others. Congress's $15 billion bailout for the airline industry will do nothing for the 100,000 workers that bosses plan to lay off.

Turning tragedy into war

As people around the world were still grappling with the enormity of the loss of life in the attacks on New York and Washington, the mainstream media were beating the drums for even more death and destruction.

"Revenge. Hold on to that thought," the *Philadelphia Daily News* shouted. "Go to bed thinking it. Wake up chanting it. Because nothing less than revenge is called for." Even liberals like *New York Times* columnist Anthony Lewis called for a military assault. "The United Nations must demand that all countries deny shelter to terrorists, and help to crush them," he wrote. In other words, the U.S. should have the right to attack any country that doesn't go along with its program.

These calls for war and revenge stood in contrast to the spirit of candlelight vigils held across the U.S. and the sacrifice, heroism and solidarity of those involved in rescue efforts.

But Bush and the U.S. military are seizing the opportunity to push through policies that they've been unable to win for decades. The *International Herald Tribune* reported that the Bush administration was considering a "menu of options" that includes:

- reauthorization of political assassination as an option for U.S. policy, including the deliberate targeting of individual adversaries with missile strikes;
- open U.S. support for foreign surrogate forces to make war on regimes backing "international terrorism";
- punitive expeditions by U.S. troops, including airborne forces or Marine landings to seize capitals or other sensitive territory long enough to overthrow "terrorist regimes."

In all this, there hasn't been even a hint of opposition from official Washington. "There's no air, and there's no light between the president and the Congress, and between the Republican and Demo-

Who's leading the war drive?

DICK CHENEY

Dick Cheney has plenty of experience in gearing the U.S. up for war. After all, he was Papa Bush's defense secretary during the 1991 Gulf War against Iraq. Cheney reveled in Operation Desert Slaughter. According to one congressional staffer, his briefings to Congress were "a horror show. Cheney tended to dwell on the gruesome efficiency of the bombing campaign and [hyped] the smart-bomb technology with piles of data that later proved bogus."

Before the Bush administration, Cheney was a leading Republican in the U.S. House—where he compiled a voting record to rival that of Jesse Helms. In 1985, he voted against a House resolution calling on the butchers of apartheid South Africa to release Nelson Mandela after 23 years of imprisonment—on the grounds that Mandela's African National Congress was a "terrorist" organization.

After being run out of Washington with his boss in the 1992 election, Cheney became CEO of Halliburton, the world's largest oil services company. Halliburton made a killing on contracts in Kuwait after the Gulf War. And thanks to Cheney's Pentagon contacts, the company raked in billions in military deals—plenty of which trickled up into Cheney's pockets.

COLIN POWELL

Colin Powell has been called the "shining star" of Bush's cabinet. But the "heroic" leader of Operation Desert Storm has a record that's tarnished with war crimes.

During the Vietnam War, Powell was sent in to help cover up the 1969 My Lai massacre, in which U.S. troops slaughtered some 400 Vietnamese villagers. As a functionary in the Reagan administration, he helped the notorious basement White House to organize the contra war against Nicaragua—even after Congress voted to forbid all support.

In 1989, Powell oversaw the invasion of Panama. An estimated 7,000 Panamanians died during the operation to bring down Manuel Noriega, a dictator formerly backed by the CIA. Powell headed the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Gulf War. He explained his plan of attack against Iraq's poorly trained and equipped army: "First, we're going to cut it off; then, we're going to kill it."

JOHN ASHCROFT

Here's a man who'll have no objection to carrying out George W. Bush's planned attack on civil liberties.

Ashcroft holds extreme right-wing views on everything from abortion rights to affirmative action to civil rights for minorities and gays and lesbians. Reviewing his record as a senator, as governor, and as attorney general of Missouri, the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* wrote in an editorial, "Mr. Ashcroft has made a career out of opposing school desegregation in St. Louis and opposing African Americans for public office."

An open admirer of the Confederacy, Ashcroft earlier this year signed off on a Justice Department report that claimed the federal death penalty system isn't racist—despite the fact that 80 percent of defendants in federal capital cases from 1995 to 2000 were minorities.

DONALD RUMSFELD

"Rummy," as Donald Rumsfeld is known to his buddies, never met a weapons system he didn't like.

As defense secretary under Gerald Ford, Rumsfeld helped to resuscitate the Pentagon after the U.S. defeat in Vietnam. He engineered the collapse of the SALT II arms control treaty with the former USSR—and backed any proposal for new military spending that came across his desk, including for the B-1 bomber, which proved so unreliable that the Air Force decided not to use it.

As a corporate executive, Rumsfeld made a name for himself as a "cost-cutter," slashing jobs at G.D. Searle and the technology firm General Instrument.

cratic Parties," said House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.). "We stand shoulder to shoulder."

Indeed, out the window went the Democrats' promises to protect Social Security from Bush's giveaways to the rich and Corporate America. Within days, Congress had passed tens of billions in "emergency" spending, mostly for the Pentagon. Democrats even dropped objections to the White House's insane plans for a Star Wars missile defense scheme.

Money that should be spent on health care, education or any one of a number of areas that would help working people will now be robbed to pay for a military that is already the largest and most powerful in the world by far. Meanwhile, the "defenders of working people" spent more time savaging one of their own members—Rep. Barbara Lee (D-Calif.), the only member of Congress with the courage to vote against a bill giving Bush a blank check to wage war—than they did even questioning the White House.

The rush to judgment

To justify all this, media and politicians fixed on Osama bin Laden, the millionaire Saudi businessman who has been accused of other attacks on U.S. targets. There was a problem, though. Weeks after the attacks, authorities had little evidence to show a link between bin Laden and the men thought to be the hijackers.

On September 21, the *Times* even published—in its back pages—a story admitting that five of the 19 men named as hijackers by authorities were cases of mistaken identity. "Some who share the same name as the suspects were alarmed to see their own faces staring back at them from newspapers and television networks which published photographs and personal details of the alleged perpetrators," Reuters reported.

We may never know who was behind the attacks, but it's worth remembering that the same "terrorism experts" who are pointing the finger at Arabs did the same after the 1995 bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building. After stirring up a racist backlash that led to physical attacks on Arab Americans, these "experts" made no apologies when authorities apprehended white supremacist Timothy McVeigh.

In their rush to assign blame and demand revenge, no politician or journalist bothered to ask a simple question: Why would someone target the U.S.?

The answer can be found in the devastation and misery wreaked around the world by the U.S. in its role as the world's biggest superpower. In the last two decades alone, the U.S. has launched military attacks on Grenada, Libya, Panama, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Afghanistan and Yugoslavia—and this doesn't even count wars where the U.S. backed a proxy force. In the Middle East, U.S. policy has left millions embittered—from American support for Israeli repression of Palestinians to the continuing U.S.-led war on Iraq that has killed more than 1 million people.

As former President Jimmy Carter—looking back at the Iran hostage crisis at the end of his presidency—told the *New York Times:* "We have only to go to Lebanon, to Syria, to Jordan, to witness

Sacrificing for their bottom line

WHILE PEOPLE around the world mourned the victims of the September 11 attacks, big business mourned its bottom line.

Mark Bayless, a spokesperson for an insurance industry group in London, made the priorities of the corporate fat cats clear when he whined, "The terrible disaster we have had just wiped out more than one year's income for the entire global aviation insurance industry."

The airline industry was the favored area for politicians to show their concern. Congress and the Bush administration rushed through a $15 billion bailout plan to fatten the bank accounts of the corporations. But not a dime will go to the more than 100,000 airline industry workers slated to be laid off.

"Members of Congress appear poised to stiff airline industry workers in the bailout bill—even as they award protections to airline executives for their golden parachutes," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney.

In fact, to try to create the illusion of fairness, the legislation bars airlines from giving fat bonuses to executives who make more than $300,000 a year! But nothing was said about executive salaries themselves—when the income of just one would support several dozen workers on the money that they'll get from unemployment benefits.

Meanwhile, Congress rushed through a $40 billion "emergency spending" bill, the majority of which will go straight to the Pentagon. For years, Congress has shot down spending for child care, welfare, health insurance and other programs because they were "too expensive." But now there's no limit to the money that Washington will pour down the Pentagon drain.

So much for Bush's opposition to "big government." His planned spending increase on his "top priority"—education—amounts to less than one-sixth of what the Treasury will hand over to the airline bosses.

The administration and Congressional Republicans are angling for even more giveaways to the rich—like a cut in the capital gains tax and "fast-track" trade negotiating authority. Only now, they're being sold as an "economic stimulus" in response to terrorism.

"Americans also know that a strong economy is essential to any war effort, and this also gives Mr. Bush a big opportunity," advised the *Wall Street Journal.*

"In particular, the phony 'trust fund' constraints on fiscal policy have fallen with the Trade Center towers, opening as much as $150 billion a year in surplus for pro-growth tax cuts."

The tanking of the U.S. economy is now being blamed on the September 11 tragedy. But an economic slump—and probably a recession by the official definition—was well underway before the attacks. And not every company saw its stock price fall when Wall Street started trading again a week after the attacks. Share prices for defense-related companies took off, with Pentagon giants like Northrup Grumman and Raytheon leading the way to double-digit gains.

In fact, Corporate America has a long record of using war to line its pockets. Meanwhile, working people will be told that their jobs and living standards are under threat because of "terrorism." Already, aircraft giant Boeing has seized on the September 11 tragedy as the reason to announce a layoff of 30,000 workers—even though these cuts were the latest phase of a downsizing effort underway for years.

There will be more layoffs to come as the recession deepens. But workers can't expect a bailout like the ones that will cushion the blow for the bosses. Instead, they'll hear more calls to "sacrifice for the good of the country." But going along with this will only allow bosses to wrap themselves in the American flag while they keep squeezing us.

firsthand the intense hatred among many people for the United States, because we bombed and shelled and unmercifully killed totally innocent villagers, women and children and farmers and housewives in those villages around Beirut…As a result, we have become a kind of Satan in the minds of those who are deeply resentful. That is what precipitated the taking of hostages, and that is what has precipitated some terrorist attacks."

If the September 11 attacks turn out to have connections to opponents of U.S. policy in the Middle East—which is by no means proven—then they are disastrously misguided. Far from putting the U.S. on the defensive for its international crimes, the attacks have allowed the U.S. establishment an opportunity to rally the country around this tragedy—and push through a right-wing agenda, both at home and internationally.

This much is plain: George W. Bush and his friends in Washington are using a terrible tragedy to win support for war.

"We won't stand for this racism"

IN DALLAS, shots were fired into a Muslim mosque. In Mesa, Ariz., a Sikh was shot and killed in front of his gas station. In San Francisco, an Indian man was punched and called a "dirty Arab"—and his white friend was stabbed trying to defend him.

Similar stories are being reported across the country—acts of violence and harassment in the wake of the tragedies in New York and Washington, D.C., that have sent a chill of fear through Arab and Muslim communities.

The source of these attacks isn't hard to see. The media were full of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim rants in the aftermath of September 11. "Kill the bastards," wrote *New York Post* columnist Steve Dunleavy. "No, I don't mean hunt them, arrest them, extradite them and prosecute them in a court of law. I mean a far quicker and neater form of retribution for this cabal of cowards. A gunshot between the eyes, blow them to smithereens, poison them if you have to."

Using the cover of sympathy for the victims in New York and Washington, racists across the U.S. took the cue.

Some carried out their attacks on the streets. Others did so from seats in Congress.

"If I see someone come in, and he's got a diaper on his head and a fan belt around that diaper on his head, that guy needs to be pulled over and checked," Rep. John Cooksey (R-La.) said in a radio interview. Cooksey later apologized—but added that a war on terrorism can't be won "if we have to stop every five minutes to make sure we're being politically correct."

The Louisiana lawmaker may be especially crude, but he's following a lead from the top. While George W. Bush made sure to visit a mosque after the attacks and condemn assaults on Muslim Americans, you have to question his sincerity when, on the very same day, he harkened back to Wild West days, suggesting posters that read "Wanted Dead or Alive." The *New York Post* picked up on the president's message, printing its own "Wanted Dead or Alive" posters featuring a photo of Osama bin Laden.

One reason that several Sikhs have been attacked is that their traditional headdress and beards resemble the pictures of bin Laden. "And the media just showed that over and over and over," said Guru Roop Kaur Khalsa, a minister of the Guru Nawak Dwara Sikh temple in Phoenix. "It sets us up."

Whipping up a racist hysteria

We've seen this kind of racist hysteria before. Arab Americans were chased through the streets by angry mobs following the 1979 seizure of the U.S. Embassy in Iran. In the days following the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing, some 200 incidents of harassment, threats or violence against Arab Americans were reported. Of course, the terrorist in that bombing turned out to be white American Nazi Timothy McVeigh.

Attorney General John Ashcroft has told reporters that new security rules at airports will mean that passengers will be questioned if there's "any suspicion"—

though "we are not at the place of saying that people are suspects based solely on their race or ethnic origin," Ashcroft said.

Yet the reality is that racial profiling is standard procedure. Ask the three men who were barred from boarding a flight at the Minneapolis–St. Paul International Airport. They were interrogated and their luggage was searched after they were described to police as "suspicious"—because they were of Middle Eastern descent.

And when victims of racist harassment report incidents to authorities, they're usually ignored—or worse. Karim Fareh, a 22-year-old Tunisian immigrant, tried to flag down a police officer in a patrol car when he saw an angry mob of people coming toward him on a street in Philadelphia's Kensington neighborhood. Fareh said the cop screamed at him, "Go fucking home! You're drunk!" and drove away.

The mob kicked and beat Fareh and slashed him with a knife. When the same cop responded to Fareh's 911 call, he screamed some more and drove off—not even taking the bleeding man to a hospital. Fareh is thinking about going back to Tunisia. "I feel I'm [treated like a] human there," he said.

Yet in the face of such horrible attacks, many Arabs and Muslims are finding concern and solidarity. Ahmad Ansari worships at the Cleveland mosque that a man intentionally smashed his car into after September 11. "People are constantly leaving flowers, making donations for the repair of the property," Ansari told *Socialist Worker*. "I came here 40 years ago, and I'm seeing the best of Americans now. I never realized people could be so good."

This instinct of solidarity can be organized and built upon. When early morning prayers at a Chicago Southwest Side mosque came to a halt after someone threw bricks through the windows, activists got to work. Religious and community groups organized defenses at the mosque.

Sister Margaret brought letters of support from her students. "As an African American…I have experienced racism," wrote a ninth grader, "and I wanted show my support." As Hakim Husien of the Palestine Aid Society said, "We're here to show that we are all one people, and we will not stand for hate crimes, racism or racial profiling. This is the message that the people here are sending."

We have to organize to stop this racist scapegoating!

Baying for blood

"THERE'S AN old poster out West, I recall, that said, 'Wanted: Dead or Alive.'"

■ **George W. Bush**

"GEORGE BUSH is the president… Wherever he wants me to line up, just tell me where."

■ **CBS News anchor Dan Rather**

"IF I see someone come in, and he's got a diaper on his head and a fan belt around that diaper on his head, that guy needs to be pulled over and checked."

■ **Rep. John Cooksey (R-La.)**

"ANY GOVERNMENT that shelters groups capable of this kind of attack, whether or not they can be shown to have been involved in this attack, must pay an exorbitant price."

■ **Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger**

"THE PERPETRATOR and those who give them safe haven should be in our bomb sights. I say bomb the hell out of them. If there's collateral damage, so be it."

■ **Sen. Zell Miller (D-Ga.)**

"WE NEED to be prepared to act as if we are at war. And that doesn't necessarily mean that you have to strike back only at those that you know were the perpetrators…I know this is going to sound awful, but my point is there is only one way to begin to deal with people like this, and that is you have to kill some of them, even if they're not immediately involved in this thing."

■ **Former Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger**

"WE'VE GOT to stop talking as if this is a crime—this is war. We're going to have to begin killing people. It's not about bringing people to justice. It's about going after them and killing them."

■ **Eliot Cohen, director of strategic studies at Johns Hopkins University**

"IT'S TIME for the United Nations to get the hell out of town. And take with it CNN war slut Christiane Amanpour…Everyone with a gripe against Israel or America has joined the orgy in the guise of 'analysis.' Analyze this, you bastards."

■ ***New York Post* columnist Andrea Peyser**

"WE ARE not going to be reading anybody their rights. No one is covered by Miranda. Any country, any city, any region and any person who makes common cause with those who make war against America is making war against America, and the wages of sin is death."

■ **Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas)**

"THE ABORTIONISTS have got to bear some burden for this because God will not be mocked. And when we destroy 40 million little innocent babies, we make God mad. I really believe that the pagans, and the abortionists, and the feminists, and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU, the People for the American Way, all of them who have tried to secularize America, I point the finger in their face and say, 'You helped this happen.'"

■ **Jerry Falwell**

The rights they want to take away

GEORGE W. BUSH claims that the U.S. was targeted for the September 11 attacks because those responsible "hate our freedoms."

Doesn't make much sense when you think about it. But just to be certain, the Bush gang wants to be sure that there isn't anything left to hate.

White House officials are planning sweeping new attacks on civil liberties as part of their "war against terrorism"—and almost every politician in Washington, Democrat and Republican, is going along for the ride.

Numerous restrictions on the power of government officials are up for grabs—from rules on wiretaps and searches to unlimited detentions during "emergencies." It used to be that only right-wing kooks talked about this stuff. But now the political mainstream has latched onto the idea that the U.S. was vulnerable to attack because we have too many civil liberties.

Bush even invented a new Cabinet-level position—head of the Office of Homeland Security, a name that could have come from George Orwell's *1984*.

And the man he's picked to run it? Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge, who has a long history of trampling on civil rights. Ridge led the drive to speed up executions in Pennsylvania—signing a total of 214 execution warrants in less than seven years, two-thirds of them for African American men. And during last year's Republican National Convention, he backed Philadelphia police, who arrested hundreds of protesters on fake charges and held them in jail for days.

With that kind of record, Ridge will fit right in with Attorney General John Ashcroft.

Almost immediately after the attacks, Ashcroft told the Immigration and Naturalization Service to extend the amount of time that immigrants can be held without being charged with a crime from 24 to 48 hours—or for "an additional reasonable time, if necessary, under an emergency, or in other extraordinary circumstances." For the more than 100 foreign nationals and immigrants "detained" in the early days of the investigation, this meant sitting in jail—on no evidence at all—indefinitely.

The crackdown spread beyond the U.S. as well. In France and Germany, press reports describe widespread roundups of Islamists on dubious charges. And in Italy, the government of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi—responsible in July for the gunshot killing of a global justice demonstrator—is using the tragedies in the U.S. as an excuse for cracking down on other antiglobalization activists.

Ashcroft has an even broader attack planned. For one thing, he wants to expand the use of "secret evidence" against immigrants or foreign nationals—something introduced in the 1996 Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act that was signed into law by Bill Clinton in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing.

"Neither the detainee nor the attorney gets to see what [evidence] the prosecutors have, so there's no way for the alien or detainee to defend themselves," said Carol Khawly, an immigration attorney with the Anti-Defamation Coalition.

Ashcroft's new proposals, says lawyer Mike Maggio, are "basically making a doormat of the Constitution. [They] would permit the INS to serve as prosecutor, judge and jury with no judicial review."

And immigrants aren't Ashcroft's only targets.

The attorney general wants to allow police to obtain "roving wiretaps," giving cops the authority to tap any phone that a "suspect" uses, regardless of whether or not it's their phone. Plus his proposal would allow the FBI and other police agencies to seize information from Internet companies without a court order.

Not that the FBI waited for any laws to be passed. In the days following the attacks, agents tried to strong-arm Internet companies into installing the Carnivore program to allow the government to "eavesdrop" on Internet communications.

The Bush gang is clearly exploiting fear of terrorism to gain new powers that it could use at will. And who can believe that these men—who will eagerly take innocent lives in Afghanistan—would stop short of using their new powers against those who speak up against them in the U.S.?

"This country has a long tradition of responding to fear by stifling dissent, punishing association, launching widespread political spying and seeking shortcuts around the Constitution," Georgetown University law professor David Cole wrote in the *Nation* magazine.

Bush's new best friends

THE U.S. government is out to get Osama bin Laden and topple Afghanistan's Taliban regime for "sheltering terrorism." But it had to scramble to come up with an Afghan opposition to the Taliban.

The politicians and their media mouthpieces are now painting the Northern Alliance as heroic opponents of the Taliban's repressive regime. But in reality, the Northern Alliance is a quarreling bunch of warlords cut from the same cloth as the Taliban.

"When I was in Kabul last year, I was told time and again that the only thing people there feared more than the Taliban were the warlords of the Northern Alliance," Patricia Gossman, an expert on human rights in South Asia, wrote in the *Washington Post* on September 28, 2001.

In fact, leaders of the Northern Alliance ruled Afghanistan before the Taliban replaced them in 1996. Their reign was so chaotic and violent that the Taliban was able to sweep across the country and take power in a period of months. "From 1992 to 1995, fighting among the factions of the alliance reduced a third of Kabul to rubble and killed more than 50,000 civilians," Gossman wrote. "The top commanders ordered massacres of rival ethnic groups, and their troops engaged in mass rape."

The 1992-96 regime was called the Islamic State of Afghanistan (ISA). During the group's four years in power, there was "no rule of law" in areas it controlled, according to a July report by Human Rights Watch. As they warred with one another, each faction terrorized the local population in the areas it controlled, using summary executions, arbitrary arrests, torture and "disappearances."

In 1995, one faction captured a Kabul neighborhood that had been a former stronghold of another. "[T]roops went on a rampage, systematically looting whole streets and raping women," the U.S. State Department said of the incident.

Now the Northern Alliance has become the U.S.'s on-the-ground ally in the war on the Taliban—in a repeat of the "enemy-of-my-enemy-is-my-friend" logic that helped to propel repressive Islamist regimes like the Taliban to power during the Cold War rivalry between the U.S. and USSR.

"U.S. officials—who know full well the whole bloody, rapacious track record of the killers in the 'Alliance'—are suggesting in good faith that these are the men who will help us bring democracy to Afghanistan and drive the Taliban and the terrorists out of the country," Robert Fisk wrote in Britain's *Independent* newspaper. "In fact, we're ready to hire one gang of terrorists—our terrorists—to rid ourselves of another gang of terrorists. What, I wonder, would the dead of New York and Washington think of this?"

The person that the U.S. hopes will give cohesion to this ragtag bunch of thugs is former king of Afghanistan Mohammed Zahir Shah, who was deposed in 1973. The 86-year-old king is a bit senile now, but the *Wall Street Journal*—that defender of freedom around the world—says he has a good sense of humor. And, the paper insists, "Monarchy and democracy can be symbiotic." Huh?

But that's just the beginning. In its "war against terrorism," the Bush administration is embracing a rogues' gallery of governments that are among the most violent and antidemocratic in the world. Take Russia. From its place in Bush's "coalition against terror," Russia wants to extract international support for its own reign of terror—in the rebellious province of Chechnya. The Russian forces' onslaught in Chechnya targeted hospitals, apartment blocks and schools without distinction—and killed more than 50,000 people in its onslaught on the capital of Grozny alone.

Or look at Saudi Arabia. Long the U.S. government's main Arab ally, Saudi Arabia is one of the most repressive countries on Earth. There are no elections, and political parties are banned. Under the same Islamic laws imposed by the Taliban in Afghanistan, the oppression of women and religious minorities in Saudi Arabia is savage. But the U.S. considers Saudi Arabia a crucial ally—perhaps because the country sits on 26 percent of the world's proven oil reserves.

Then there's Pakistan. When Gen. Pervez Musharraf seized power in Pakistan in an October 1999 military coup, George W. Bush—then stumping for support for his presidential bid—seemed pleased. "The new Pakistani general, he's just been elected—not elected, this guy took over office," Bush stammered. "It appears this guy is going to bring stability to the country, and I think that's good news for the subcontinent." Pakistan has been the main sponsor of the Taliban government in Afghanistan. But in exchange for its cooperation, the U.S. is offering Pakistan economic aid and has ended sanctions imposed after Pakistan tested nuclear weapons as part of its ongoing rivalry with India. But many parts of the regime still support the Taliban, and collaboration with the U.S. could ignite a massive popular upheaval.

"Virtually useless" food drops

President Bush proudly declared that the air strikes on Afghanistan would be accompanied by food drops—to help millions of Afghans on the edge of starvation.

But, according to experienced aid workers, these air drops are at best "virtually useless" and at worst "could be lethal."

One spokesman for an international charity active in Afghanistan told the British newspaper *The Independent*, "Random food drops are the worst possible way of delivering food aid. They cause more problems than they solve." Will Day, chief executive of Care International, told *The Guardian* of London on the first night of bombings that "Air drops make great TV but they also represent a failure to respond to a food crisis." Oxfam director, Barbara Stocking, insists that "Trucking of food is tried and tested. Air drops are risky, random, expensive, and likely to meet only a fraction of the need." But so long as bombs are falling, aid agencies have halted all food caravans trucked into the country.

Even worse, those fortunate few who run to collect the food drops could find themselves in the middle of a minefield. Omar, an organization acting to dispose of Afghanistan's 10 million landmines left over from the invasion of the former Soviet Union refers to the country as "the world's biggest minefield." Omar told *The Independent*: "There are still 10-15 mine incidents every day. The food packets were mainly dropped in the central highlands and along the Pakistan border, both areas of suspected mines."

Not only are the air drops inefficient and dangerous, but only 37,500 individual rations were dropped to feed the estimated eight million Afghans living "on the brink of disaster," according to the United Nations. Only two cargo planes dropped food in the first days of bombing, but more than 125 flights each day would be required to meet the humanitarian catastrophe deepening as a result of war in Afghanistan. Bush's humanitarianism is killing Afghans.

How Afghanistan was bled dry

"WE COME now to the question of bombing Afghanistan back to the Stone Age," Afghan American writer Tamim Ansary wrote in an article for *Salon* magazine. "Trouble is, that's been done… Make the Afghans suffer? They're already suffering. Level their houses? Done. Turn their schools to piles of rubble? Done. Eradicate their hospitals? Done. Destroy their infrastructure? Cut them off from medicine and healthcare? Too late. Somebody already did all that."

The U.S. is prepared to wreak havoc in a country that has already been devastated by more than 20 years of military occupation and civil war. Millions of Afghans live in refugee camps. The country has more than 500,000 disabled orphans. Much of the already devastated countryside is experiencing a drought, leading to famine in some areas.

The U.S. government's massive military power will make things far worse. But past U.S. actions are in no small part responsible for the misery and poverty that already exist in Afghanistan. As the *Economist* magazine put it, "[U.S.] policies in Afghanistan a decade and more ago helped to create both Osama bin Laden and the fundamentalist Taliban regime that shelters him."

The U.S. is only the latest power to cause mayhem in the country. Modern Afghanistan emerged during the 19th century as a buffer state squeezed between the Russian and British empires. From the beginning, it was a pawn in battles between these two world powers. The country's mountainous terrain protected it from imperial occupation, but also resulted in little economic development.

Afghanistan has always been one of the poorest countries in the world. By the 1970s, less than 10 percent of the population was literate, and life expectancy was only 35 years. The central state was weak, and outside of a few cities, Afghan society remained traditional, with power divided among rival ethnic clans.

This began to change in the 1950s and 1960s. As a result of foreign aid from the former USSR and the U.S.—which were competing for influence during the Cold War—there was a shift of power toward the state.

In 1973, the corrupt and repressive regime of King Zaher was overthrown by Zaher's cousin, Daud, who declared a republic. But expected reforms didn't materialize, and the emerging urban middle class grew increasingly discontented.

In April 1978, as Daud tried to move against opponents to his left, he was overthrown and killed by army officers sympathetic to the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which had close ties with the USSR. But the new government had little support in the countryside, and its attempt to institute reforms from above was disastrous.

Resistance began to spread across Afghanistan. It was met with severe repression as the government itself broke into hostile factions. The opposition came to be dominated by a collection of radical Islamist groups—known as the "mujahideen," or holy fighters—with reactionary political ideas, especially concerning women.

In December 1979, hard-liners in the USSR—worried that a regime hostile to them might come to power in Afghanistan—decided to intervene. Russian troops advanced on the capital of Kabul, killed the president and replaced him with their own man.

For the next decade, the USSR fought a brutal war for domination of the country. More than 1 million Afghans died, and millions more fled their homes, becoming refugees in neighboring Pakistan and Iran.

Backed to the hilt by the U.S. government

But the Afghan rebels were able to endure—thanks to the fact that they were backed to the hilt by the U.S. government. Between 1979 and 1989, "the CIA and Saudi intelligence together pumped in billions of dollars worth of arms and ammunition," wrote the *Economist*.

In fact, in a 1998 interview, Zbigniew Brezinski, who was national security adviser in the Carter administration, admitted that Washington had begun funding the mujahideen six months before the Russian invasion in order to provoke "a Soviet military intervention."

The U.S. deliberately chose to back Islamic fundamentalist organizations, rather than secular and nationalist groups, because Brezinski hoped not just to drive the Russians out of Afghanistan, but to cause unrest within the USSR itself.

"The U.S. should stop supporting Afghan terrorists"

These are excerpts from a statement by the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan.

THE U.S. government should consider the root cause of this terrible event, which has not been the first and will not be the last one. The U.S. should stop supporting Afghan terrorists and their supporters once and for all.

Now that the Taliban and Osama bin Laden are the prime suspects after the criminal attacks, will the U.S. subject Afghanistan to a military attack similar to the one in 1998 and kill thousands of innocent Afghans for the crimes committed by the Taliban and Osama? Does the U.S. think that through such attacks—with thousands of deprived, poor and innocent people of Afghanistan as its victims—it will be able to wipe out the root cause of terrorism? Or will it spread terrorism on an even larger scale?

From our point of view, a vast and indiscriminate military attack on a country that has been facing permanent disasters for more than two decades will not be a matter of pride. We don't think such an attack would be the expression of the will of the American people.

The U.S. government and people should know that there is a vast difference between the poor and devastated people of Afghanistan and the terrorist Jehadi and Taliban criminals.

While we once again announce our solidarity and deep sorrow with the people of the U.S., we also believe that attacking Afghanistan and killing its most ruined and destitute people will not in any way decrease the grief of the American people.

With the support of Pakistan's military dictator, Gen. Zia ul-Haq, the U.S. began recruiting and training mujahideen fighters from the 3 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan—as well as large numbers of mercenaries from other Islamic countries. The operation was supervised by the CIA, with Pakistani forces carrying out the work on the ground. "The trainers were mainly from Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence agency, who learnt their craft from American Green Beret commandos and Navy SEALS in various U.S. training establishments," wrote the British military magazine *Jane's Defence Weekly*.

Washington leaders fell in love with their rebel army in Afghanistan. Ronald Reagan—the same man who denounced the African National Congress and the Palestine Liberation Organization for not renouncing violence—described the mujahideen as "freedom fighters." Reagan met in Washington with rebel leaders like Abdul Haq, who openly admitted his responsibility for terrorist attacks, such as a 1984 bomb blast at Kabul's airport that killed at least 28 people.

Meanwhile, with CIA assistance, the mujahideen greatly expanded opium production in areas under its control—turning Afghanistan into what one U.S. official later described as the new Colombia of the drug world.

By 1989, with casualties mounting and its troops in a state of near-rebellion, the USSR finally withdrew its forces from Afghanistan. The administration of George Bush Sr. celebrated the Russian retreat—and promptly turned its back on Afghanistan, cutting off aid to the rebel forces that they had armed, trained and supported.

Afghanistan collapsed into virtual anarchy. Almost a quarter of the population was in refugee camps, and most of the country was in ruins. Meanwhile, in the words of the *Economist*, the U.S. had left it "awash with weapons, warlords and extreme religious zealotry."

Different factions of the mujahideen struggled for power in the countryside, while the government of Muhammed Najibullah, the last USSR-installed president, remained in control in Kabul. Kabul finally fell in April 1992 to one faction of the mujahideen. But the civil war continued.

In 1994, a new organization, the Taliban, emerged. Its members had been trained in the religious schools set up by the Pakistani government—with U.S. support—along the border. The Taliban advocated an ultra-sectarian version of Islam. Under its rule, Afghan women have been denied education, health care, and the right to work, and must cover themselves completely in public. With the aid of Pakistan's army, the Taliban swept across an exhausted country, taking power in 1996.

The U.S. government made no criticism of a regime that it now demonizes as the main source of international terrorism. A State Department spokesperson told reporters that there was "nothing objectionable" about the Taliban's coming to power—an opinion that wasn't shared by Afghan women or the Taliban's political opponents, who were savagely repressed.

In fact, the U.S. hoped the Taliban would provide stability for international corporate interests. Its "most important function," one commentator wrote, "was to provide security for roads and, potentially, oil and gas pipelines that would link the states of Central Asia to the international market through Pakistan rather than through Iran."

Return of the "great game"

Today, U.S. politicians denounce the Taliban regime for its repression and brutality. But this is rank hypocrisy. Washington's warlords are only looking for an excuse for war.

In fact, the U.S. has been preparing for military action since it fired cruise missiles at Afghanistan in 1998 because of Osama bin Laden's alleged involvement in the bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa.

According to several press reports, the U.S. last year joined the "Shanghai Five"—an informal alliance of Russia, China and three Central Asian states against "Islamic terrorism." Joint operations of U.S. and Russian commandos to capture Osama bin Laden were discussed,

How the U.S. trained Osama bin Laden

AS SOON as speculation turned to who was responsible for the September 11 air attacks, there was one name on the lips of every media commentator and "terrorism expert": Osama bin Laden.

This is nothing new. Bin Laden has been a favorite bogeyman for the Washington establishment whenever the U.S. becomes a target. He's been blamed for the suicide attack on a U.S. destroyer in Yemen last year, the bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa in 1998, and more.

But if bin Laden is involved in terrorism, he was taught by the best—the U.S. government.

Both he and the Taliban militia group in Afghanistan that protects him are products of the U.S. government's largest covert operation since the Vietnam War—the 10-year-long, U.S.-backed war against the ex-USSR's occupation of Afghanistan.

Bin Laden, a civil engineer and businessman from a wealthy family in Saudi Arabia, was one of the first non-Afghan volunteers to join the mujahideen rebels fighting the Russians. He recruited 4,000 volunteers from his own country and developed close relations with rebel leaders in Afghanistan.

He also worked closely with the CIA to raise money from private Saudi citizens. "In 1988, with U.S. knowledge," reports *Jane's Defense Weekly*, "Bin Laden created Al-Qaeda (The Base): a conglomerate of quasi independent Islamic terrorist cells spread across at least 26 countries...Washington turned a blind eye to Al-Quaeda, confident that it would not directly impinge on the U.S."

When the U.S. turned its back on Afghanistan after the USSR's defeat, bin Laden and other Islamists saw this as a betrayal and began to consider themselves opponents of the U.S.

"Their heightened political consciousness made them realize that countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt were just as much client regimes of the United States as the Najibullah regime [in Afghanistan] has been of Moscow," writes author Dilip Hiro. "In their home countries, they built a formidable constituency—popularly known as 'Afghanis'—who combined strong ideological convictions with the guerrilla skills they had acquired in Pakistan and Afghanistan under CIA supervision."

Over the past decade, the "afghani" network has been linked to terrorist attacks not only on U.S. targets, but in the Philippines, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, France, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, China, Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and elsewhere.

"This is an insane instance of the chickens coming home to roost," one U.S. diplomat in Pakistan told the *Los Angeles Times*. "You can't plug billions of dollars into an anti-Communist jihad, accept participation from all over the world and ignore the consequences. But we did."

and Washington turned a blind eye to Russia's slaughter of Islamist rebels in Chechnya.

But Washington's goals in Central Asia go beyond attacking bin Laden or the Taliban. The collapse of the USSR in 1991 brought a revival of what 19th-century diplomats called the "great game"—military and political maneuvers by the big powers to gain control of the region.

In 1997, U.S. Marine Gen. John Sheehan led a military exercise in Kazakhstan on the territory of the former USSR. As *U.S. News and World Report* noted: "After shaking hands with the defense ministers of Kazakhstan, Kirgizstan and Uzbekistan, Sheehan told some American journalists: 'The message is that there is no nation on the face of the Earth that we cannot get to.' Why did the U.S. military conduct the longest airborne operation in history to get to Kazakhstan? Oil. By 2010, Central Asia is expected to surpass the North Sea and become the world's third-largest producer of oil and natural gas, after the Middle East and Russia."

Ironically, it was the drive to gain control of Caspian Sea oil in Central Asia that led the U.S. to support the Taliban after it came to power in 1996. "This amoral or immoral policy is based on the assumption that the Taliban would bring stability to Afghanistan and permit the building of oil pipelines from Central Asia through Afghanistan to Pakistan," said Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.), a conservative supporter of the CIA's covert operations in Afghanistan in the 1980s.

The U.S. was willing to support the Taliban regime in order to prevent a pipeline from running through Russia or Iran. But when the Taliban pursued its own interests—tolerating bin Laden and supporting Islamist movements in neighboring countries—Washington reversed course.

Frictions in the coalition

Now the U.S. claims to be working with countries around the world to build an alliance for the "war against terrorism." But the coalition isn't without frictions.

Washington's NATO allies in Europe were quick to invoke a treaty measure that calls for a "common defense" whenever one member is attacked. German Prime Minister Gerhard Schröder offered German participation in military action, calling the September 11 attacks a "declaration of war against the civilized world." For Schröder, this is another opportunity to legitimize the use of his country's military, which saw no action between the defeat of the Nazis in 1945 and NATO's Kosovo war of 1999.

As usual, British Prime Minister Tony Blair endorsed Washington's call for a war. But Bush's repeated baying for blood soon unnerved other allies—such as France, which worries that a Western attack on Middle Eastern countries could

The two faces of U.S. power

THE MEANING OF MARXISM ◆ BY PAUL D'AMATO

THE FAMOUS war strategist Karl von Clausewitz wrote that "war is a continuation of policy by other, i.e., forceful means." *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman expressed this idea clearly in terms of U.S. interests.

"For globalization to work," Friedman wrote, "America can't be afraid to act like the almighty superpower that it is. The hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist. McDonald's cannot flourish without McDonnell Douglas, the designer of the F-15, and the hidden fist that keeps the world safe for Silicon Valley's technology is called the U.S. Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps."

Before September 11, many activists organizing for global justice looked at the free-market policies of the U.S. and Europe and concluded that national states had become increasingly irrelevant—replaced by stateless and rapacious multinational corporations. There was even a fashionable new book called *Empire* to put forward these arguments.

But the massive buildup for war after the September 11 suicide attacks showed how wrong these ideas are.

Impressively, many activists and groups that were mobilizing for late September demonstrations against the policies of the World Bank and IMF immediately saw the need to start opposing the government's war drive. These activists feel in their gut that "globalization"—the imposition of policies designed to benefit Western corporations in their pursuit of limitless profits—is connected to Washington's desire to dominate the world militarily.

And they're right. The "Washington consensus"—imposing U.S. *economic* interests around the world through free-trade deals and structural adjustment programs—isn't suspended while the U.S. pursues its war. On the contrary, this is its *military* extension.

This isn't new. Writing just over 100 years ago, Sen. Alfred Beveridge of Indiana described America's new pretensions to economic and military domination. "American factories are making more than the American people can use; American soil is producing more than they can consume," Beveridge said. "Fate has written our policy for us; the trade of the world must and shall be ours...We will cover the ocean with our merchant marine. We will build a navy to the measure of our greatness."

Every few decades or so, economic rivalries between the biggest imperial powers have given way to political conflicts—and political conflicts to outright war. These wars have come both in the form of world wars that pitted the imperial powers against each other, and smaller wars involving powerful states attempting to defend their "spheres of influence" and to send a message to anyone who might challenge them.

What's different today—at least for now—is that the U.S. stands as the world's "sole" superpower. Its military actions reflect not a desire for revenge, but to demonstrate, both to its allies and enemies, that its military and economic power can't be challenged.

U.S. political leaders don't put it that way. In the wake of the attacks in New York and Washington, they've tried to convince people who are upset and angry that the solution is to expand the role of the U.S. as the world's biggest cop.

But counting on the U.S. government for "justice" is like calling on Al Capone to wipe out a street-corner gang—the solution is worse than the problem.

Of course, the Capones will say that they're fighting for "freedom" against "terrorism." And they will describe their own state-sponsored terror—such as the inevitable bombings of civilians in Afghanistan—as acceptable "collateral damage."

As Palestinian author and activist Edward Said put it, the U.S. is not a "sleeping giant" recently awakened to anger and outrage, but a heavily armed superpower that has been more or less constantly waging war in different forms for decades.

Or as a columnist for the *Times* of London concluded: "Playing the world's policeman is not the answer to that catastrophe in New York. Playing the world's policeman is what led to it."

spiral out of control.

Just to make a coalition with Muslim countries possible, Washington had to pressure Israel into agreeing to a cease-fire in its war on the Palestinians. But even if Israel stays muzzled—and this is unlikely, if the past is any guide—Bush has numerous other problems in the Middle East and Central Asia.

The U.S. had to pressure Pakistan's military regime into supporting U.S. action against the Taliban. This has put that country on the verge of an upheaval, with huge anti-U.S. demonstrations taking place in major cities. Plus, the U.S. is also supporting the Afghan rebel group, the Northern Alliance, which Pakistan is opposed to.

And while Russia initially welcomed U.S. action against the Taliban—Afghanistan threatens Russia's own interests in Central Asia—the conflict could also set the stage for a dangerous confrontation between Moscow and Washington. For example, there were reports that U.S. forces would use a former USSR air base in Uzbekistan—a move that Russia will see as a threat.

The air attacks in the U.S. have been used by all the great powers to justify aggressive policies and militarism everywhere. Far from making the world a safer place, Bush's "war on terrorism" threatens violence and war on a far greater scale.

The U.S., Israel and the Middle East

ALMOST IMMEDIATELY after the attacks in New York City and Washington, D.C., Israel's war against the nearly year-old Palestinian uprising took on a new ferocity.

There was little notice in the U.S. media. But the Israeli press could hardly contain its delight. The Israeli newspaper *Ma'ariv* urged Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon "to seize the moment and use against terrorism the kind of means which hitherto he did not dare to use for fear of international reaction."

But Sharon didn't need prodding. For four days after September 11, Israeli forces laid siege to the Palestinian town of Jenin. "It is an invasion of the Palestinian territory far longer—and with far more severe consequences—than the April invasion of the Gaza strip which at the time drew a sharp reprimand from the U.S. State Department (nothing of the kind this time, needless to say)," wrote the Israeli human rights group Gush Shalom.

The Israeli military also invaded parts of Beit Jala, Jericho, Rafah, Khan Younis, Hebron and Ramallah in "the largest number of simultaneous operations since the uprising started," according to Israel Radio's military correspondent.

One week into Israel's new campaign, the U.S. stepped in to broker a cease-fire agreement between Yasser Arafat's Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government. The deal was part of American efforts to rein in its ally Israel in order to build an "anti-terror coalition" that includes Arab governments.

But the prospects for the cease-fire are dim. Within a week of the agreement, violence had already flared. Yet more fundamentally, the cease-fire, like many before it, doesn't address the underlying sources of the conflict—Israel's occupation of Palestinian land and the apartheid-like conditions faced by more than 2 million Palestinians.

These are the roots of the violence, and Palestinians rightly blame the U.S. for being the main supplier of arms and political backer of the Israeli government.

It's weaponry made in the USA that gives Israel the overwhelming force that has maimed and injured several thousand Palestinians—and killed more than 500—since the Intifada began a year ago. Israel uses U.S. aircraft and military supplies to carry out its assassinations of Palestinians—under the name of "fighting terrorism." And it's U.S. diplomatic support for Israel that allowed the government to get away with sealing off Palestinian towns and villages, actions that have plunged almost half of the population into dire poverty.

There's a simple reason why the U.S. backs Israel in its war against Palestinians: Middle Eastern oil. As Lawrence Korb, an assistant defense secretary under Ronald Reagan, said of U.S. preparations for war after Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, "If Kuwait grew carrots, we wouldn't give a damn."

Israel has long been central to U.S. aims in the region. In 1967, after months of provoking its neighbors, Israel launched a war to seize areas of Palestine that it didn't occupy during the 1948 war that drove 700,000 Palestinians off their land. Israel routed the militaries of Egypt, Syria and Jordan—and took the Golan

Heights from Syria, the West Bank and East Jerusalem from Jordan, and the Gaza Strip and Sinai Peninsula from Egypt.

But the U.S. didn't condemn Israeli aggression. On the contrary, the 1967 war proved to the U.S. that it could use Israel as its watchdog in the region. Between 1967 and 1972, U.S. aid to Israel jumped by almost 50 percent.

The money was well spent, according to foreign policy analyst Stephen Zunes. "Israel has helped suppress victories by radical nationalist movements in Lebanon, Jordan, and Yemen, as well as in Palestine," Zunes wrote. "The Israeli military has kept Syria, for many years an ally of the Soviet Union, in check, and its air force is predominant throughout the region. Israel's frequent wars have provided battlefield testing for American arms. Israel has also served as a conduit for U.S. arms to regimes and movements—such as apartheid-era South Africa, Iran, Guatemala and the Nicaraguan contras—too unpopular in the United States for overt and direct military assistance."

"Israel's military is pounding my hometown"

This e-mail message was sent by Saifedean Ammous, a Palestinian living in Ramallah in the West Bank, as Israeli forces invaded the city.

I AM writing to you now to the sound of Israel's "Defense Forces" pounding the living daylights out of my hometown, Ramallah. As the whole world is busy paying tributes to the victims of terror attacks in New York and Washington, Israel has had a field day in terror attacks of their own on us here.

Every day, they have invaded a few cities using tanks, helicopters and fighter jets. Since the beginning of the Intifada, there hasn't been Israeli aggression like that witnessed since last Tuesday. No one could put this clearer than Shaul Mofaz, Israel's Chief of Staff, who boasted that his forces have killed tens of Palestinians—and no one in the world said anything.

Everyone seems to be more interested in backing that raging cowboy Bush as he declares his country is going to war against an as yet unidentified enemy.

The attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon is a clear act of terror that I and millions of Palestinians denounce. Yet it's painful to see how the whole world has had nothing to do in the last few days but mourn the victims, while more than a million and a half civilian Iraqis have died since the beginning of the U.S. terror campaign on Iraq.

Why did no one weep for them, why did no one weep for the hundreds of thousands in Rwanda, and why is my people's suffering under the illegal Israeli occupation no longer interesting to anyone?

Excuse me if my thoughts are a bit incoherent or if my sentences seem to make little sense, but it is really hard to concentrate with Apache choppers hovering a few hundred feet above your head, armored tanks unleashing their might on your neighborhood, all sorts of missiles flashing across your window, and a nearby building being obliterated to rubble.

If you don't hear from me anymore, then know that one of those missiles has managed to find its way to my room, turning me into a meaningless number in a meaningless statistic that no one will pay attention to.

Israel must not be allowed to continue its attacks on Palestinians. If terror is to be fought in this world, state terror is the first terror that must be eradicated.

America's endless war on Iraq

U.S. support for Israel has created bitterness and desperation on a massive scale in the Middle East. And if this is one part of the picture, another is the ongoing U.S. war against Iraq.

The September 11 attacks in New York and Washington took thousands of innocent lives—a horrific act of violence by any account. But United Nations sanctions against Iraq—kept in place since the 1991 Gulf War at the insistence of the U.S. government—take the lives of 5,000 children *every month*.

Not only do U.S. officials tolerate this "senseless loss of life" inflicted on the Iraqi population. They openly defend it. As then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told a *60 Minutes* correspondent in 1995, "the price" of 500,000 dead Iraqi children—the number of children killed by sanctions up to that time—"we think, is worth it."

The 1991 Gulf War against Iraq—organized and led by the U.S.—killed as many as 200,000 Iraqis and left the country in a "pre-industrial state," according to the UN. Since then, more than 1 million Iraqis have died because of sanctions.

U.S. officials blame this genocide on Saddam Hussein, claiming that his government withholds food and medicine for its own use. But Denis Halliday and Hans von Sponeck, two former directors of the UN oil-for-food program, resigned in protest against the sanctions.

Both say that the problem lies with the UN embargo and the complete inadequacy of the oil-for-food program, not with the Iraqi government. "Oil for food is a stranglehold," according to Halliday, who resigned in fall 1998 after 34 years of working in the UN system. "It's just keeping 22 million people in a refugee camp."

We should remember Albright's words when we hear the drumbeat about "terrorists" who "have no regard for human life." To the Bushes and Albrights of this world, such rhetoric is only an excuse to justify atrocities far worse than the ones committed on September 11 in New York and Washington, D.C.

The U.S.: Beacon of democracy?

TO GEORGE W. Bush, the explanation for the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington is simple. "They hate what they see right here in this chamber," he told a joint session of Congress September 20. "They hate our freedoms, our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other."

Since the attacks, Bush and other political leaders have constantly repeated the image of the U.S. that everyone learns in grade school—that America has always been a beacon of democracy, a "shining city on a hill."

But former slave and abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass had a different view of America.

"What, to the American slave, is your Fourth of July?" he asked in an angry speech in 1852. "I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity…your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery…a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages."

Douglass was challenging the most appalling hypocrisy of U.S. democracy—a country whose founding document, the Declaration of Independence, stated that "all men are created equal," but that treated millions of human beings as property.

The U.S. Constitution declared Black slaves to be three-fifths of a person for purposes of representation in Congress, and it established the Electoral College to assure that the slaveholding states in the South had a disproportionate role in choosing the president.

The South dominated the federal government of the U.S. for close to a century until the Civil War—with every "democratic" institution of the U.S. kowtowing to the slavocracy. And none more so than the U.S. Supreme Court—where three-quarters of justices came from slave states until the Civil War. The Supreme Court produced the low point of American democracy in 1857 when it ruled in the *Dred Scott* decision that Blacks shouldn't be considered U.S. citizens, even if they were free. "[Blacks have] no rights that the white man is bound to respect," summarized Chief Justice Roger Taney.

Only the overthrow of the slavocracy in the Civil War extended citizenship to African Americans. Yet a dozen years after the defeat of slavery, this expansion of democracy had been rolled back with an onslaught of night-rider terror in the South—and federal neglect. Jim Crow segregation and the disenfranchisement of Blacks—not to mention most poor whites—took root across the South and would last for another century.

The development of Jim Crow in the South took place as the U.S. was becoming an industrial power on a world scale. And U.S. bosses made sure that democracy didn't get in the way of their fortunes.

When workers tried to organize for better conditions, employers lashed out with a level of violence matched only by the Tsarist dictatorship in Russia. U.S. robber barons set up private armies and networks of spies to crush attempts to organize unions. As a result, the main industries of the U.S. weren't organized by unions until the 1930s.

Even today, laws protecting workers' rights are barely honored. "In the United States, millions of workers are excluded from coverage by laws to protect rights of organizing, bargaining and striking," a 2000 Human Rights Watch report concluded. "For workers who are covered by such laws, recourse for labor rights violations is often delayed to a point where it ceases to provide redress. When they are applied, remedies are weak and often ineffective. In a system replete with all the appearance of legality and due process, workers' exercise of rights to organize, to bargain and to strike in the United States has been frustrated by many employers who realize they have little to fear from labor law enforcement through a ponderous, delay-ridden legal system with meager remedial powers."

Truth is the first casualty of war

THE U.S. government has a long history of manipulating the truth—even outright lying—in order to win public approval for its military adventures.

- On February 15, 1898, an explosion ripped through the *USS Maine* off the coast of Spanish-controlled Cuba, killing 268. Though an inquiry was unable to determine the cause of the explosion, the U.S. press conducted a hysterical campaign blaming Spain. The campaign propelled the U.S. into the Spanish-American War, in which the U.S. seized control of Puerto Rico, Cuba and the Philippines.
- President Lyndon Johnson announced in August 1964 that the U.S. would carry out air strikes against North Vietnam in response to two "unprovoked" attacks by North Vietnamese PT boats against U.S. destroyers on the high seas.

  The truth was that the U.S. destroyer *Maddox* was engaged in intelligence-gathering maneuvers—inside Vietnam's territorial waters—timed to coincide with coordinated attacks on North Vietnam by the South Vietnamese Navy and the Laotian air force. The second claimed PT boat attack never happened. "For all I know," Johnson later said, "our Navy was shooting at whales out there." But the incident gave Johnson the excuse he needed to ram the Gulf of Tonkin resolution through Congress and escalate U.S. involvement in Vietnam.
- While Ronald Reagan was railing against the scourge of drugs in the 1980s, he was directing the CIA and the National Security Agency to use drug revenues to secretly fund a dirty war against the Nicaraguan government. The U.S.'s client army in Nicaragua—the contras—killed more than 30,000 people.
- After Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, the U.S. media carried reports—later proved false—that 300 premature babies had died after Iraqi soldiers had removed them from their incubators. The reports were part of an orchestrated effort to win public support for a war that killed 200,000 Iraqis.

Crackdown in times of war

Times of war and crisis have always put the U.S. government's supposed commitment to democratic ideals to the test.

More often than not, civil rights and liberties have lost out.

As far back as 1798, the administration of President John Adams passed the Alien and Sedition Acts, making it a crime to write or say anything "false, scandalous and malicious" against the government. Ten people went to jail for this "crime," and the Supreme Court upheld every conviction.

During the First World War, Congress passed the Espionage Act, making it a crime to oppose U.S. involvement. The war was unpopular, and thousands of people turned out at antiwar meetings and demonstrations. The government used the Espionage Act to cut off this growing opposition. Nine hundred people, including the socialist leader Eugene Debs, went to prison under the Espionage Act.

The U.S. government went to similar lengths during the Second World War, even imprisoning 100,000 Japanese Americans in concentration camps for no crime other than their race—an action that the Supreme Court declared constitutional.

All of these measures have been justified by politicians as protecting America's "security." But the real goal has been to crack down on opposition and dissent.

That's why the end of both the First and Second World Wars was followed by government-led witch-hunts against radicals and labor activists that wrecked the lives of thousands of people and hammered left-wing organizations like the Industrial Workers of the World and the Communist Party.

When the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements revived the left in the 1960s, the feds relied on their old tricks. The FBI spied on Black leaders like Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, and its COINTELPRO program infiltrated radical organizations with agents provocateurs. In the heart of American "democracy," the FBI organized the assassination—under cover of "police shootouts"—of dozens of leaders of the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. In 1969 alone, police killed 27 Panthers and jailed 749.

"The greatest purveyors of violence in the world"

The U.S. government's actions abroad show even less respect for "democracy" or "peace."

The U.S. emerged as a world power during the Spanish-American war of 1898, when the armed forces killed 2 million people in the Philippines. Over the next four decades, American interventions increased—to expand the holdings and increase the dominance of American corporations.

Marine Gen. Smedley Butler described that period in his memoirs: "I spent most of my time being a high-class muscleman for Big Business, for Wall Street and for the Bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism...I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in. I helped in the raping of half a dozen Central American republics for the benefits of Wall Street.

"The record of racketeering is long. I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China, I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested."

Many believe that the role of the U.S. in the Second World War was different. Actually, Washington fought not for freedom, but to dominate the world. The U.S. refused to bomb railroad tracks to concentration camps during the Holocaust. Yet it did drop two atom bombs on a Japan that was starving and virtually defeated—just to demonstrate its awesome military might and its willingness to use it.

During the Cold War against the former USSR, the U.S. armed and equipped murderous dictatorships around the globe—the military rulers of South Korea, Somoza in Nicaragua, Pinochet in Chile, Mobutu in Zaire, the Shah of Iran and many more. If some of those tyrants are gone, the same policies continue to this day. As Amnesty International wrote in 1996: "Throughout the world, on any given day, a man, woman, or child is likely to be displaced, tortured, killed, or 'disappeared,' at the hands of governments or armed political groups. More often than not, the United States shares the blame."

For most of the years after the Second World War, America's violence around the world was justified in the name of fighting communism—and the war in Vietnam was a prime example. That intervention cost the lives of 58,000 U.S. service personnel. The horrific tactics of the U.S. military—including carpet bombings of civilian targets, use of napalm and wholesale massacres—led to the deaths of 3 million Vietnamese and other Asians.

It was this slaughter that led civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. to oppose the war. "We were taking the Black young men who had been crippled by our society and sending them 8,000 miles away to guarantee liberties in Southeast Asia which they had not found in southwest Georgia and East Harlem," he told an antiwar meeting in April 1967. "I could never again raise my voice against the violence of the oppressed in the ghettos without having first spoken clearly to the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today—my own government."

For the last decade, the U.S. has been the world's only superpower—and has continued to use its economic and military might to bend weaker nations to its will.

Washington imposes International Monetary Fund and World Bank policies that crush the poor in Asia and Latin America. It used the NATO military alliance in Europe to wage a war in the Balkans. And because it imposes murderous sanctions against Iraq and backs Israel's repression of Palestinians, the U.S. is widely hated in the Middle East.

Such policies inevitably rebound on innocent people in this country, as foreign policy expert Chalmers Johnson predicted a year ago in his book *Blowback*.

"Terrorism by definition strikes at the innocent in order to draw attention to the sins of the invulnerable," Johnson wrote. "The innocent of the 21st century are going to harvest unexpected blowback disasters from the imperialist escapades of recent decades. Although most Americans may be largely ignorant of what was, and still is, being done in their names, all are likely to pay a steep price—individually and collectively—for their nation's continued efforts to dominate the global scene."

The struggle for our rights

The U.S. government and its representatives like to give speeches about democracy and freedom. But they've been only too willing to toss these ideals out the window when it suits their purposes—both at home and abroad.

The rights and freedoms Americans have today weren't granted from on high. They're the result of the struggles of ordinary people—against the politicians and business leaders who so willingly wrap themselves in the American flag.

Working people owe their right to organize and speak out in part to the IWW's "free speech" fights around the country in the 1910s. We have free trade unions because generations of working-class activists have stood up to bosses' threats. African Americans smashed Jim Crow and won the right to vote with mass protests and defiance of the law in the 1950s and 1960s. And antiwar

protests and organizations helped to convince a majority of people in the U.S. of the injustice of the Vietnam War—including the rank and file of the U.S. armed forces.

As Gregory Palast, one of a handful of reporters to expose the fraud in Florida that put George W. Bush in the White House, put it: "The American tradition of democracy doesn't come from 'Great Men' like Thomas Jefferson. It comes from the streets. People have been organizing for years. Martin Luther King and the Voting Rights Act come out of that mobilization. Democracy is not based on what was granted to us from above. That's what makes America democratic."

Why we say no to war and hate

Socialist Worker talked to dozens of leading opponents of war and racism about the background to the tragedies in New York and Washington, D.C., and the struggle to stop Bush and the politicians from causing worse disasters. Here are excerpts from some of their comments.

NOAM CHOMSKY

Longtime opponent of U.S. imperialism and author of numerous books, most recently, *The New Military Humanism.*

THAT THIS was a horrendous crime is not in doubt. The primary victims, as usual, were working people: janitors, secretaries, firemen, etc. It is likely to prove to be a crushing blow to Palestinians and other poor and oppressed people. It is also likely to lead to harsh security controls, with many possible ramifications for undermining civil liberties and internal freedom.

The events reveal, dramatically, the foolishness of the project of "missile defense." As has been obvious all along, and pointed out repeatedly by strategic analysts, if anyone wants to cause immense damage in the U.S., including weapons of mass destruction, they are highly unlikely to launch a missile attack, thus guaranteeing their immediate destruction. But today's events will, very likely, be exploited to increase the pressure to develop these systems and put them into place.

"Defense" is a thin cover for plans for the militarization of space, and with good PR, even the flimsiest arguments will carry some weight among a frightened public. In short, the crime is a gift to the hard jingoist right—those who hope to use force to control their domains.

RANIA MASRI

Coordinator of the Iraq Action Coalition and media director of the Palestinian rights group Al-Awda.

SINCE THE terrorist attacks, various "Middle Eastern looking" minority communities—including Muslim Americans, Arab Americans, South Asian Americans, and Sikh Americans—have suffered hundreds of (reported) verbal assaults, harassments, and physical attacks.

These attacks against fellow Americans have been perpetrated by a small group of people. The vast majority of us stand united by our compassion, united against racism. And the media have been supportive in highlighting these assaults. However, the mainstream media has not been as objective as it needs to be. It has repeatedly aired clippings of a small group of Palestinians rejoicing, while failing to state that all Palestinian organizations condemned the attacks.

The media have also repeatedly reported on "suspects" who "look Middle Eastern," thus further fueling the xenophobic sentiment that is taking hold of a small group of violent people, all of whom appear to "look European."

As deep as our pain is now, we need to understand that our suffering is neither unique nor exclusive. The road to peace is the road to security. And the road to peace and justice begins with the imple-

mentation of peace and justice, at home and abroad.

CHALMERS JOHNSON

Author of *Blowback: The Costs and Consequences of American Empire.*

THIS ISN'T an "attack on the United States." It is an attack on U.S. foreign policy. It was our people who invented the concept of "collateral damage," referring to the Iraqi and Serb civilians that were killed from our safely impervious bombers.

The people of New York who died on Tuesday were "collateral damage" of recent American foreign policy, including our unilateralism; our walking away from the conferences on global warming, racism, the world criminal court and chemical weapons, while pursuing monomaniacally a ballistic missile defense system; and our indifference to the antiglobalization movement from Seattle to Genoa—even though our Department of Defense uses the movement's main premise as a reason for why we should put weapons in space: that under our current economic policies, the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

LAWRENCE HAYES

Former death row prisoner in New York and member of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty.

ON SEPTEMBER 11, I watched in utter shock as One WTC was engulfed in flames and smoke and a civilian aircraft slammed into Two WTC.

My nephew, Cornelius Butler, who spent two-and-a-half years in the New York death house with me, worked in One WTC. I'm glad to say that he made it out of the building. But I'm concerned about the effect that these two brushes with death are having on him.

There's no excuse for the tragic events of September 11. As a revolutionary, I find no honor in an assault against innocent civilians. But as long as governments support the idea of killing and death as a means to an end or a legitimate option, we will continue to witness these kinds of tragedies. As long as there are no reasonable and sound mechanisms for the poor and oppressed to obtain justice, they will seek desperate means to strike back—and the powerful will call them terrorists.

Our hearts go out to the victims of this senseless tragedy and their families. I urge all those who want to end the terror mentality—by individuals and governments—to join us in our nonviolent movement to seek justice, end war and condemn "killing and death" as a legitimate option in the United States.

MEDEA BENJAMIN

Cofounder of Global Exchange and the Green Party's candidate for U.S. Senate from California in last year's election.

WE HAVE to convince people that a military response will only create more of the hatred against the U.S. that created this terrorism in the first place.

Everybody says that the world

"Democracy isn't about falling into line" HOWARD ZINN

Howard Zinn is the author of *A People's History of the United States* and a veteran antiwar activist. He spoke at a teach-in against the war in Boston at the end of September. These remarks are excerpted from that speech.

THEY WANT us to forget the history of governments and the history of our government. The writer I.F. Stone used to be asked to speak to journalism classes, and he would say, "If you want to know about governments, all you have to know is two words: governments lie." That's a fact. Not just our government, but all governments. They lie.

We must learn something about the history of government and the relationship of people to government and what democracy is really about.

Democracy isn't about falling in line behind the president. Democracy is for people to think independently, be skeptical of government, look around and try to find out what's going on—and if they find out that government is deceiving them, to speak out as loudly as they can. That's democracy.

If we don't know history, we won't understand how much animosity we've engendered elsewhere in the world—not just in the Middle East, but all over the world. If we don't have any history, we'll live our lives with the kind of things we were taught in school—that America is a beacon for democracy and freedom in the world. We'll think that we've been the Boy Scouts of the world—helping countries across the street.

But to study the history of American foreign policy is to study the history of an imperial power—a power that took over from the British Empire and the French and Dutch and established the most powerful empire after the Second World War, sending its ships and its troops all over the world and intervening again and again so far from home that no one could talk about it being defensive.

In its foreign policy, the U.S. consigned several million people to their deaths. In this foreign policy, it supported terrorist governments in various parts of the world, especially in Latin America and the Middle East.

I'm stressing all this because we all have to become communicators of this history—because the public isn't getting this history from schools, from televisions, from the newspapers. It then becomes the jobs of informed citizens to do what's lacking in the media.

So we have to broaden our definition of terrorism. We have to think about this awful thing that happened on September 11. We need to feel deeply about it—and for the victims and the families.

But we also need to learn from it. We also need to remember the scenes of people racing in shock from the fires and people crushed—and we ought to remember that these are scenes that have happened for a long time in other parts of the world. Therefore, we need to see terrorism as an international phenomenon.

American citizens are not the only victims of terrorism.

One more thing about remembering—Abraham Lincoln was right. You can fool some of the people all of the time, and you can fool all of the people some of the time. But you can't fool all of the people all of the time.

If people do wake up after the first wave of supporting our president, and their common sense and common humanity tells them that something is wrong here, this is something that we've seen before.

People in the U.S. woke up to what was happening to Blacks in the South, and they joined in, and the civil rights movement became a national movement. People did wake up to what was happening in Vietnam, and we had a great national antiwar movement.

So never think that, because of the polls or the news anchors, they're going to have it their way and people will always be fooled. We've seen meetings like this one grow to become great national movements in the past. We need another one today. And we may be on the way to one.

War won't bring justice

Ahmed Shawki is editor of *International Socialist Review* and a member of the International Socialist Organization. He spoke at a plenary session of the People's Summit in Washington, D.C., at the end of September. These are excerpts from his speech.

AHMED SHAWKI

THE TRAGEDY of September 11 is being used by the government of this country not to honor those who died, not to search for justice, but to advance its own agenda. Some of it has been in the works for years and couldn't be advanced. But they intend to try to use this crisis to push as quickly as possible.

The attacks are coming fast and furious: militarism and a drive to war; a slew of attacks on minorities—Arabs, Muslims, Sikhs, people of color. I'm wearing a button today that I wouldn't have thought I'd have to wear, which says simply, "No scapegoats! Being Arab is not a crime." But it is the case that, instead of flying to D.C., I drove. It is the case that hundreds of Arabs, Muslims and others have been visited by law enforcement agencies to ask if they have a connection—what are their politics, what are their views.

It is the case that this government is moving forward with legislation to expand police powers. They're talking about surveillance mechanisms and about rolling back a whole number of rights that it took years and years to win.

This is what Silvio Berlusconi feels confident to say to reporters: "We should be confident of the superiority of our civilization, which counts on value systems that have given people widespread prosperity and guarantees respect for human rights and religion. This respect does not exist in the Islamic countries." And he goes on to discuss the need—and he puts it very bluntly—for the West and Christian civilization to recolonize those parts of the world that are now unstable and out of their reach.

That is the kind of politics that's being floated. And it's the kind of politics that domestically finds its reflection in George W. Bush's demands for Star Wars and for new security laws. Plus the Republicans who want to give money to the rich to fight terrorism.

Their proposal is for a capital gains tax cut and a new tax structure to benefit the rich. Why? To fight terrorism, of course. How? Well, it's not exactly clear. But when it comes to the question of compensation for workers whose family members or colleagues died in the World Trade Center, not a penny is to be found in the U.S. Treasury.

As House Majority Leader Dick Armey of Texas said: "The model of thought that says we need to go out and extend unemployment benefits and health insurance benefits and so forth is not one which is commensurate with the American spirit."

There was a tragedy that took place in America on September 11. But there isn't one America. There isn't the America that we stand all united in.

This country, from its very inception, was a country that privileged some and excluded many. It's a country that was built by the labor of many to the benefit of the few. And it's a country in which war has always been used, no matter how noble the supposed cause, in order to advance the interests of those who run this country.

Don't believe me. Believe U.S. Marine Gen. Smedley Butler, who wrote still the best indictment of imperialism that I've ever read by a member of the Marine Corps: "I spent 33 years and four months in active military service as a member of this country's most agile military force, the Marine Corps...And during that period, I spent most of my time being a high-class muscle man for big business, for Wall Street and for the bankers. In short, I was a racketeer, a gangster for capitalism...

"I helped make Mexico, especially Tampico, safe for American oil interests in 1914. I helped make Haiti and Cuba a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues in...I helped purify Nicaragua for the international banking house of Brown Brothers in 1909-1912. I brought light to the Dominican Republic for American sugar interests in 1916. In China, I helped to see to it that Standard Oil went its way unmolested."

Now people will say that Butler was talking about the 1910s. But I say that we already know what this war will be about.

We had a brief glimpse of it in the 1991 Gulf War. That was supposedly a war to preserve democracy in a feudal monarchy. That war produced the term "collateral damage"—the Pentagon's phrase meaning the death of innocents.

At the turn of the 20th century, four-fifths of all deaths in wars took place on the battlefields. By the turn of the new millennium, that proportion was reversed—four-fifths of those who die in the wars are civilians.

A call to war today will not bring us a step closer to justice. But it will bring danger and instability to the world that will cause further violence.

Now some people say, "What about justice then?" The brother who spoke just said that we want justice, and we want peace. But I think he rightly also said that we have to be very wary who is asking for justice, on whose terms and in what way.

This country, for example, has refused to abide by the UN resolutions that have asked for the condemnation of the state of Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands—yet there's talk about the UN presiding over a tribunal.

We should not be asked to respect two different sets of laws. The old abolitionist leader Frederick Douglass said this once in a speech on the Fourth of July.

He said that you ask me to speak here on the Fourth of July, and you speak of freedom and dignity in a country that enforces slavery. This is the height of hypocrisy. And I condemn not the people of this country but those who would attempt to use the language of justice in order to advance their own narrow interests.

It wasn't so long ago, on March 21, 1983, that Ronald Reagan declared Afghanistan Day in honor of the "freedom fighters" who were fighting in Afghanistan, armed and trained by the CIA. That's one group of people in this country that knows all about Osama bin Laden. In fact, the president's father would know something about that, too—about how it all started.

We will not allow them to take the language of justice away from our movement. We do not have to explain why we're against war, why we're for civil liberties and against racism—versus those who never supported the right thing.

In the 1960s, the United States meant two things to the world. On the one hand, it represented napalm, it represented war, and it represented the barbarism of the war it was conducting in Vietnam. But it also represented something else to hundreds of thousands of people. I know my first thoughts at the time in Egypt were not about the Vietnam War—but were about the pride I felt when the Black Panther Party stood up and said we should have rights here.

There are two Americas. There's an America of the rich and powerful. And there's the one that represents us. And there are also those who would bring war to this country, and there are those who are adamantly opposed to war.

changed after September 11. But the question of how it will change is up to us. If the U.S. responds militarily, then we will see more violence and more loss of life. But if we can build a strong movement for global peace, then maybe we can build a world that is free of terrorism and the conditions that create terrorism in the first place.

NORMAN SOLOMON

Syndicated columnist on media and politics and author of *The Habits of Highly Deceptive Media.*

WITHIN HOURS after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Colin Powell said, "Once again, we see terrorism, we see terrorists, people who don't believe in democracy, people who feel that with the destruction of buildings, with the murder of people, they can somehow achieve a political purpose."

If you read that and you look at the phrase, "people who feel that with the destruction of buildings, with the murder of people, they can somehow achieve a political purpose," we're reading an apt description of Colin Powell himself, and the people he works with and for.

Specifically, it's a very good description of what he and his colleagues—including Dick Cheney and George Herbert Walker Bush—did during the Gulf War, which after all is the reason why Colin Powell is so prominent today. He became a media superstar supervising a war that—in less than two months, according to the Pentagon itself—killed about 200,000 people with exactly the underlying approach that Powell condemned right after the tragedy took place.

MICHAEL ALBERT

Editor of *Z* magazine/ZNet.

I GENERALLY oppose war because it uses fear to galvanize people's worst behaviors, because it kills innocents, because it creates conditions that further injustice rather than mitigating injustice.

War now would pile catastrophe on top of catastrophe, meet callousness with callousness, answer fundamentalism with rigidity. It would neither solve nor even address the problem of terrorism, but would instead be terrorist itself and simultaneously lay the groundwork for more to come.

KATHY KELLY

Member of the group Voices in the Wilderness who recently ended a fast and vigil in New York City to call for an end to sanctions against Iraq.

IT'S STILL hard to speak while hearts ache for loved ones killed on September 11. But how can we stay silent when we hear screams for revenge? No, it's time to again break ranks—be voices for peace amid the cries of hatred and war.

It's sadly ironic that the attack on America has caused a bereavement that has long been mirrored in cities, towns and villages across Iraq, where civilians have endured 11 years of cruel attacks and a devastating siege.

Nothing, nothing justifies the September 11 attacks. Nothing, nothing we've ever seen in Iraq could excuse it. But the security that people crave here requires a deeper understanding of what ordinary people have endured in countries where U.S. policies have claimed thousands of victims.

DAVID BARSAMIAN

Director of Alternative Radio in Boulder, Colorado.

A GOOD way to understand how U.S. foreign policy operates in the world is to recall the Godfather movies. If you kissed the hand of Don Corlione, then he was your friend. He would embrace you and kiss you on both cheeks. But if you didn't kiss his hand and if you didn't genuflect and honor him, then he would break your knees.

The kind of gangsterism that the U.S. conducts overseas and the bargains it strikes with the most heinous type of people—from Osama bin Laden to Ferdinand Marcos to Manuel Noriega to Saddam Hussein—is outrageous.

Most of that information is hidden from the American public. They think the United States is a victim. They don't know that the United States is the major victimizer in the world.

MATTHEW ROTHSCHILD

Editor of *The Progressive* magazine.

THE MASSIVE war that George W. Bush is planning will kill thousands of innocent people to avenge the death of thousands of innocent people. That doesn't seem to square on the scales of justice.

I'm heartened by the peace movement that is developing in a surprising way. But we're a very tiny minority according to the polls, so we need to raise our voices. And it's also important when we do raise our voices to acknowledge the pain and grief and understandable rage that many Americans feel, especially those who lost loved ones in New York or Washington or Pennsylvania.

But even as we share that grief, we need to try to persuade our fellow citizens that, as Martin Luther King said, hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence, toughness multiplies toughness, in a descending spiral of destruction.

Build the struggle against war

THE U.S. political establishment is united, Republican and Democrat, behind the drive to war. And the mainstream media spends most of its time wondering how quickly and effectively "we" can hit back with U.S. military force. To listen to these voices, the entire country has fallen in love with George W. Bush.

But thousands of people in every city across the U.S. are proving the establishment wrong.

Within days—and even hours—of the September 11 attacks in New York and Washington, opponents of the drive to war began organizing vigils, meetings and protests to call for peace. These events helped many who questioned Bush's flag-waving and scapegoating to overcome the isolation that they felt immediately after the attacks.

In New York City, just a few miles from the World Trade Center, more than 2,000 turned out September 14 to Union Square, the site of a round-the-clock vigil ever since the attack. "Mourn the victims, Islam is not the enemy, war is not the answer, fight for global peace and justice," was the crowd's message.

A week later, 5,000 marched from Union Square to Times Square, where demonstrators joined up with a vigil of Muslim and Arab people at Madison Square Park. "It was amazing to be there," said one protester. "I think a lot of people are angry and upset, but the overwhelming sentiment was that we don't want more innocent people to die."

The biggest turnouts were in the Bay Area. At the University of California-Berkeley, some 5,000 people marched in opposition to war a week after the attacks. On September 29, some 10,000 people gathered in San Francisco for an antiwar demonstration. That same day in Washington, D.C., some 7,000 people rallied on the streets of the capital in one of a series of protests held around the country on a national day of action.

College campuses across the U.S. have become centers of antiwar organizing. For example, students at Wesleyan University in Connecticut formed Peaceful Justice, a nationwide antiwar network that coordinated a National Student Day of Action for Peaceful Justice on September 20. "We started sending out e-mails Friday morning, and by Sunday, we already had 80 schools," Wesleyan sophomore Mary Thomas told ABC News.

In all, some 150 campuses in 36 states participated in the day of action—

The rhythm of resistance

BY SHARON SMITH

MANY WAL-MART stores sold out of American flags in September, unable to keep up with the surge of patriotism that has swept the country since September 11. No longer the subject of popular ridicule, George W. Bush's popularity climbed to 86 percent, according to a Gallup poll.

All opinion polls showed overwhelming popular support for retaliatory military action against terrorist networks and the countries where they're based. And a wave of anti-Arab racism has swept across the U.S., already resulting in the murder of three people (one of whom was a Sikh) because they "looked" Muslim.

In a matter of days following September 11, the political climate across the U.S. was transformed. Indeed, an evening in front of the television listening to Bush's cronies filling the airwaves with talk of global war, espionage, political assassinations and commando hit squads feels like being transported back in time to the 1950s. One almost expects *Dragnet* reruns to start appearing.

But it's necessary to look beyond the mass media to get the real picture of the state of politics in U.S. society.

Many thousands across the U.S. have already shown their determination to organize against Bush's war drive and to defend Arabs and Muslims against racist attacks. More than 100 campuses participated in a day of action against war and racism September 20—with a rally of 5,000 students at the University of California-Berkeley and hundreds more at other schools. From the beginning, this antiwar movement far surpasses the size of opposition to NATO's 1999 carpet bombing of Serbia—and even the Gulf War against Iraq in 1991.

Moreover, many of those who today express support for Bush and a U.S. military response can be won to oppose the war in the weeks and months to come.

Wars are traditionally accompanied by a surge of patriotism at the beginning that melts away as it becomes clear what the real war aims are and who is expected to pay the price with their lives.

Sometimes the patriotic sentiment fades very quickly. The first President Bush learned this when his 92 percent popularity rating at the end of the Gulf War gave way to a landslide defeat in the 1992 presidential election. Even the surge of patriotism that followed the attack on Pearl Harbor gave way to a wave of wartime strikes—including in the war production industries—despite a no-strike pledge taken by the labor movement.

For several years, opposition to the Vietnam War was limited to the campus-based antiwar movement. But by 1968, the antiwar movement had grown to massive proportions, and a majority of the U.S. population opposed the war in opinion polls. That opposition continued to spread as it became clear to more people not only that the U.S. was going down to defeat but that the war itself was unjust.

Today, we must begin by helping to galvanize the significant minority—numbering in the millions—already opposed to Bush's coming war. And we must help that minority to grow by arguing with others who aren't yet convinced that the war is wrong, but who recognize the hypocrisy of Bush's policies.

Many people who are waving the American flag this week are also repulsed by the witch-hunt against Arabs and Muslims. Among the 86 percent who expressed support for Bush are those who have deep-seated anger about his theft of the election last year amid the mass disenfranchisement of Black voters. Many more were angered by the enormous tax cut handed to the rich just a few months ago—while the Medicare prescription drug benefit and health care spending languished.

Millions of people will oppose Republican attempts to rush through more cuts in social spending to pay for the coming war. And many will be horrified at the slaughter of civilians in their name—and won't want to sacrifice the lives of U.S. soldiers for it.

Opposition to this war can grow—and grow quickly. Bush's own policies may soon come back to haunt him.

although the events were largely ignored by the mainstream press.

In every city where *Socialist Worker* is distributed, readers have reported a flowering of antiwar activity—not to mention unprecedented interest in our newspaper.

All this helps to show why the media picture of a whole society united behind war is wrong.

Polls do indicate that nearly 90 percent of people favor a U.S. military response against those responsible for the air attacks in New York and Washington. But barely a majority backs action that would involve the use of ground troops, the loss of U.S. lives or the deaths of innocent civilians.

There are millions of people who today may wear American flags out of respect for the victims of the tragedy and in the hopes that the U.S. government will do justice—but who can be convinced that justice is the furthest thing from George W. Bush's mind. Our new antiwar movement needs to organize to reach as many of these people as quickly as possible.

The backdrop to this struggle is a developing radicalization over the last few years that has produced a growing layer of committed activists—in particular, around global justice issues. Many of these activists—in the midst of organizing for demonstrations against the IMF and World Bank meeting in Washington in late September—immediately turned to protesting the war drive. The connection between U.S. military and economic domination may not be obvious to mainstream observers, but it was clear to these global justice activists from the moment George W. Bush began beating the war drums.

Today's antiwar movement has started faster and with larger numbers than similar struggles of the past.

The key to growing bigger will be a focus on building at the local level. There will be many national calls for action and plans to bring together activists from different parts of the country, and they should be supported. But the strength of the movement will be in whether it can grow in every locality to embrace the largest number of people—on campuses, in communities, in workplaces and unions.

The Bush White House may be riding high now. But our side has turned out to be much stronger than anyone would have guessed. Now is the time to take the message far and wide that it's necessary to struggle against war and racism—before Washington's war costs more lives.

We do have an answer to the horror of September 11—but it begins with making a commitment to rid the world of poverty, hunger, militarism, oppression and inequality.

Another world is possible, but only if we stand up for what we believe in.

Where to find the facts

For background reading on U.S. foreign policy, war and the Middle East, look for these books:

- *Eqbal Ahmad: Confronting Empire,* interviews with David Barsamian (South End Press, 2000).
- William Blum, *Killing Hope: U.S. Military and CIA Interventions since World War II* (Common Courage Press, 1995, 2000). For excerpts, go to http://members.aol.com/bblum6/American_holocaust.htm.
- William Blum, *Rogue State: A Guide to the World's Only Superpower* (Common Courage Press, 2000). For excerpts, go to http://members.aol.com/superogue/homepage.htm.
- Noam Chomsky, *Rogue States: The Rule of Force in World Affairs* (South End Press, 2000).
- Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy* (Verso Books, 1991).
- John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism* (Pluto Press, 1999).

And look for these articles available on the Web:

- Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed, *Afghanistan, the Taliban and the United States: The Role of Human Rights in Western Foreign Policy,* on the Media Monitors network Web site at www.mediamonitors.net/mosaddeq2.html.
- Michel Chussodovsky, *Who Is Osama Bin Laden?* on the Center for Research on Globalization Web site at globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO109C.html.
- Find daily articles from dozens of authors that make a strong case against the war at the Common Dreams News Center at www.commondreams.org.

You'll also find antiwar statements, articles, fliers and reprints from the *International Socialist Review* on the Web at www.internationalsocialist.org/resources.shtml.

For other excellent collections of antiwar information and statements on the Web, go to *CounterPunch* at www.counterpunch.org and *Z* magazine/ZNet at www.zmag.org.

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